

Excellent Memorables for all Mourners: Especially Mourners for the Loss of Dearest

Gathered out of Mr. B's prepared (though not Preached) Farewel Sermon, at Netherminster, Aug. 24. 1662. upon our Saviours Words;

John 16. 22.

and you therefore have sorrow, but I will see you again, and your Hearts shall rejoice, and your joy no Man taketh from you.

THE Separation of dear Friends, made by Persecution or Affliction, doth somewhat resemble Death itself. It doth so in Eleven particulars.

1. Death is the Separation of dear Companions; and

Death is Unwelcom unto Both of them: so is the said Separation.

Death is the end of Humane Converse; so is that.

Death is the end of Earthly Comforts; so is that.

Death is the end of Humane Labours; so is that.

Death is the effect of Sickness, and usually of Folly, and Infirmity and Oversight of our selves; so is that also, most commonly.

Death pass surviving Friends into Mourning; so doth that.

Death is the end of all the Living; so is that.

Death is followed with Judgment, God's and Man's; so is that.

Death destroys not the Relations of Soul and Body, separation doth not the said Separation of Friends destroy their Relation unto each other.

Death's Power is not Everlasting; there will be a Resurrection. So the Power of the said Separation is not Everlasting. Godly Friends will surely meet again in that Kingdom which admits of no parting.

Death, I would add, Works good to the Saints: and so doth the said Separation, as grievous as it is to sense, Rom. 8. 18.

But yet this said Separation resembles not Death in all things. For,

1. No Friend is the Life of his Friend; no Pastor is the Life of his Congregation; as the Soul is the Life of its Body. It is Christ alone is our Head and Life.

2. And the Continuance of ones Welfare depends not on the continuance of any Friend with us. A Church-state depends not on the continuance of any one single Pastor whatever.

The Lord contains, [and happy is he that well attains and enjoys] these Six Doctrinal Propositions.

1. Sorrow goes before Joy, with Christs Disciples. Even before Morning. Their Sowing in Tears, before Reaping in Joy. Their Pain of Travel, before Joy of Birth. Separation of Sorrow, go before their complet Joy.

2. Sorrow goes before Joy. Though they should not do so, they do so. Worldly, Passionate, Peevish Sorrows, are Positively Sinful.

3. Sorrows in their nature Lawful, and only in their degree sinful. These be our Excessive troubles, at things which we may Lawfully Sorrow for, with Moderation.

4. Sorrows merely Natural do go before Joy. Such as Weariness of Labour, Painedness with our Diseases; grievous Feelings of Heat and Cold, of Hunger and Thirst.

5. Sorrows Categorical go before Joy. These be God's Chastisements which have a tendency to do us good, if they be improved. Such be all Sufferings in our Souls, Bodies, Estates and Friends.

6. Sorrows Honourable and gainful go before Joy. These be Sufferings from Men for the sake of Christ & the cause of Christ.

7. Sorrows Penitential do go before Joy. These are Contrition, true Repentance, Fasting, Abstinence, and Humiliation. These Sorrows we must inflict upon our selves, to Kill Sin, and Promote the work of Grace.

8. Sorrows Charitable do go before Joy. These be such as the Love of God and of his Church; and our Pity of the perishing World, do affect us with. Even as long as we live in a World full of Sin and Misery.

Here five Reasons for Sorrow's going before Joy.

1. God will have some Conformity between the order of Grace and Nature. In Nature, Nothingness was before Being; Infancy before Manhood; Weakness before Strength; Crying before Laughter. No wonder then, if Sorrow be before our Joy.

2. Sin goes before Grace; and we are the first Adam's Children, before we are Christs. It is therefore but just that Sorrow should be before Joy, where Satan goes before Christ.

3. God sends this to be the fittest Method for our Cure. We may Deny our selves, we must know how little we are able to our selves; and must smart by the fruit of our own Folly, before we are eased by the fruit of Grace and Mercy.

4. Forgoing Sorrows raise the price of following Mercies. They that come out of great Tribulation, will joyfully sing praises of their Redeemer.

5. God will have the Members conformed unto their Head. We were to the Crown by the Cross; and so shall they be to Christs. God's Will, alone, should satisfy our Souls concerning this matter: But these Reasons do set to our Eyes the Equity and Goodness of God's Will and Way.

6. Hence two things Exhorted.

1. Judge of your Sorrows not by your present Sense, but by the Word of God. Count them Purges, and Vomits; and you like best, when they work in the way wherein they should.

2. What is it you suffer by? Is it one that you suspect of Envy, Malice, or Goodness?

Q. 2. See you not that Carnal Pleasure is far more dangerous than all your Sorrows? Would you be in the condition of the ungodly, that prosper in the World?

Q. 3. Would you not rather follow your Saviour, and be conformed to Him and his Saints, than to the Wicked? Would you not go the common way to Heaven?

Q. 4. Hath not Suffering done you good, and the Cross bore you good Fruit? Why then afraid of it, and why so desirous of the Ease and Pleasure that hath often Hurt you?

Obj. But 'tis not all Sorrow that foretells Joy.

Sol. No, but all Sorrow of these three sorts doth foretell it.

1. Sorrow undergone in sincerity for Christs cause and sake.

2. Sorrow performed as a Duty, for Gods dishonour by our own and others Mens sins, and for Miseries thence rising.

3. Sorrow of Chastisement patiently suffered, and improved unto Reformation.

E. 2. Condemn not the Generation of the Just, because you see them suffer more than other Men. Be not as some Beasts; which, when one of their Fellows is wounded, do all forsake him. — And yet, err not on the other hand; think not that all be Blessed hereafter, that be Afflicted here. Know the Cause, ere you judge of the Suffering.

D. 2. Christs Death and Departure was the cause of his Disciples Sorrow. Three things grieved them;

1. That their Beloved Lord must be taken from them.

2. That He must Die in such a manner, painfully and ignominiously.

3. That He must Die while they had so little fore-sight of his Resurrection and Return. Had they known what would follow, they had been less troubled.

D. 3. The Sorrows of Christs Disciples are but short. For,

R. 1. Life is but short.

R. 2. Gods displeasure with his Servants; is but short, Psal. 30. 5.

R. 3. Our Trials, must be but short. God will see that the Furnace be not too Hot, nor we in it too Long.

R. 4. The Power of those that afflict us, is but short.

Observe then,

I. 1. Religion is not a whit disparaged by short and small Sufferings. Do any think them long? Let them consider,

1. Your Suffering will be no longer than your Sin.

2. Nor any longer than you make them NECESSARY.

3. No, not so long as you do deserve.

4. Nor so long as the Sufferings of the Ungodly, &c.

5. Nor so long as your following Joys; nor so great.

I. 2. It is reasonable that we moderate and mix our Sorrows with Joy. Being they be as hath been said; Rejoice evermore, is no unreasonable command.

D. 4. Christ will again visit his sorrowful Disciples. He means not to forsake them, when he hides his Face from them. For why?

R. 1. He hath Conquered the greatest Enemies already; and there be none remaining to Conquer Him.

R. 2. He retains still his Relation unto his Disciples. He is their Head, while they suffer so in the World.

R. 3. He loveth us now He is in Heaven as much as ever He did on Earth. He lays not by the least measure of his Love.

R. 4. His Covenant with his Servants is still in force. And his Promises cannot be broken.

R. 5. His own Interest, Honour, Office, Preparations, do engage him to return unto his disconsolate Flock. It doth so; And,

R. 6. It is for their sakes that He withdraweth for a time. The Bitter of it, is intended as Medicinal for their Benefit. John 16. 7. It is expedient for you that I go away.

Mark ye then, and be Exhorted.

E. 1. Misunderstand not the Departings of your Lord. Say not with the Evil Servant, My Lord delayeth his coming.

1. He will Return to Judge the World, at his appointed day, Job 19. 25.

2. He will Return to his seemingly Forsaken Flocks. And give them Pastors after his own Heart, Jer. 3. 14.

3. He will Return to the Souls of his particular Servants seemingly Forsaken. Weeping endures for a Night, but Joy cometh in the Morning, Psal. 30. 5.

E. 2. Learn to behave your selves well, till Christ doth Return unto you. Particularly,

1. Bear his Absence, but be not Pleased with it.

2. Be not too Indifferent neither, but Rejoice it much.

3. Be not drawn to take another Lord, or Portion, in his stead. Let not Riches, &c. serve you instead of Christ.

4. Be not emboldened to Sin by his Absence.

5. Be not discouraged from Duty, by his Absence, Heb. 12. 12.

D. 5. When Christ shall again appear to his Disciples, their Sorrows shall be turned into Joy. When He comes, Joy comes with him. When the Sun riseth, it is Light day, and Frosts are thawed, and all things revived.

1. The Deserted Soul turns from Complaints, to Triumph. He that said, There is no hope; now says, My Lord and my God.

2. The Deserted Church doth the same. Joying in its restored Ordinances, Order, Opportunities, and Advantages.

3. The Universal Church shall have an end of their Sorrows, and a Harvest of Joys, when Christ returneth at the last day.

And here attend ye well.

1. It is Christ Himself that is the Believers Joy. The Beloved of their Souls.

2. And He will not come Alone neither. He brings an innumerable Company of Blessed Saints and Angels.

D. 6. The Joy that cometh at Christs return will be a secure and everlasting Joy. Who should deprive us of it?

1. Not our Selves. For our trying time will be out, and Confirmation will be the reward of Conquest.

2. Not Devils. For there they cannot corrupt our Imaginations, or pervert our Understandings, or disturb our Passions.

3. Not any Men. The Holy and Blessed, will increase our Joy; their Joy will be ours. And as for the Wicked, they will be dis-

abled to hurt us, either by Flatteries, Threats, Reproaches, or Persecutions.

Now observe;

I. The belief of this, rejoices the Soul under all Disappointments in Earth, though the ART, and FORM, and WORDS of Holiness, cannot so do.

I. 2. Be not Deceived by a Flattering; nor Dejected by a Frowning World. No, but place your hopes on the Joys which no Man can take from you.

O Neglect not these Counsels and Requests.

C. 1. Spend most of your Studies, in confirming your belief of, 1. The Truth of the Gospel. 2. The Immortality of the Soul; And, 3. The Life to come. Lay up Treasure in Heaven; and Live for it, as Worldlings Live for the Flesh.

C. 2. Flatter not your selves with the hopes of Long Life. But make it the Summ of your Religion, Care, and Business, to be ready for a safe and comfortable Death.

C. 3. Live as in a constant War against all Fleishly Lusts, and Love not the World as it cherisheth those Lusts. He is never to be trusted, that falls deeply in Love with Riches.

C. 4. Be Furnished before-hand with Expectation and Patience, for all Evils that may befall you. And make not too great a matter of Poverty, or Wrong from Men.

C. 5. Take heed of a Self-conceit, Unhumbled Understanding, and of haughty, and rash Conclusions. It is a Fool that rageth, and is confident.

C. 6. Maintain Union and Communion with all true Christian Churches. Hold to Catholick Principles of meer Christianity. Love CHRISTIANS as Christians, but Love the BEST most.

C. 7. Be sure you maintain due Honour and Subjection unto your Governours, Prov. 24. 21. Obey no Man against God. But if you fall under persecuting Governours, in patience possess your Souls, trust God, and hold fast Innocency, and abhor Rebellion and Revenge. Do nothing but what God will own. Self-saving Men, are usually the destroyers of themselves and others. Peter, that drew his Sword for Christ, denied him the same Night, with Oaths and Curses. Fools trust themselves, and Wife Men trust God. — We may learn Wit from that Fool, who seeing great Guns and Musquets, asked, What they were to do; and being told, they were to Kill Men, laid presently, Do not Men Die here without Killing? In our Countrey they will Die of themselves.

C. 8. Be sure you keep up Family Religion. Especially in the careful Education of Youth.

C. 9. Live in the Love of God and Man. Blessed be they that faithfully practise those three Principles which all do profess. 1. To Love God as God above all, and so to Obey him. 2. To Love our Neighbour as our selves. 3. And to Do as we would be done unto.

Notes of the same Author, from Luke 20. 20.

Doctrine. To have our Names written in Heaven, is the greatest Mercy, and first, and chief, and only for it self to be desired.

In which so that the utmost in all inferior Mercies, that further than they refer to this, they are not to be the matter of our Joy.

For why?

R. 1. All common Mercies may consist with present Misery.

R. 2. Yea, they are also the ordinary and strong Means of making Men miserable, and holding them in Misery.

R. 3. They are often made the Devils Tools to do his Work by, and are used against God, to the hindrance of the Gospel, and injury of the Church.

R. 4. All of them may end in Misery, and leave the Owner in Everlasting Woe.

But I challenge all the World to tell me,

Q. 1. What should be Rejoiced in if not a Name in Heaven? If not the Lord of Life himself, the Joy and Glory of Saints? What is Heaven, but the Enjoyment of Him?

Q. 2. Is it not fit we now Rejoice, in that wherein we must Everlastingly Rejoice? If you knew the Friend and Place in which you were to have but an hundred years Joy, that fore knowledge would make them presently more delightful to you, than any other.

Q. 3. And, is not this Joy a Divine, Pure, Profitable, and a Warrantable one? Need you be Ashamed of this? Is not he the best Christian, that hath most Love, Joy, and Gratitude? Is not he the likeliest to perform best his other Duties, and to conquer his remaining Sins?

You may be sure your Names be written in Heaven;

1. If Heaven be the prebend in your Practical Efforts. If you are resolved to stick close to Christ whatever it cost you, and take God for your Portion.

2. If obtaining Heaven be your principal Care, Business, and Work, which you mind in the World.

3. If finding your selves Lost and filthy in Sin, you see Christs Sufficiency and Necessity, and unfeignedly take him for your Saviour and Lord.

4. If the Heavenly Nature be most amiable in your Eyes.

5. If you have a special Love to the Heirs of Heaven.

Rejoice not, till you have these Evidences; For, 1. God alloweth not you to Rejoice. 2. Your Joy is Unreasonable. 3. It is Dishonest and Disingenuous. 4. It is Dishonourable and Shameful. 5. It can be but short. 6. And it is Unprofitable, yea Hurtful.

Rejoice evermore, when you have these Evidences; For, Joy belongs to you, 'tis your Privilege and your Duty. Let not Satan and Firebrands of Hell, live a more Joyful Life than you, who must be Everlastingly as full of Joy, as the Sun is of Light.

Did you but know how God approves holy Right Rejoicing, more than your Pining Sorrows; and how it strengthens the Soul, and furrows Beliefs, and causeth Sufferings, and thus Gospel-grace, and numerous other Blessings, to flourish in the Soul that trieth you, you would labour and pray to have your drooping Spirits raised.

However, if Melancholy, and your Afflictions, still continue, they shall keep you sad here; as to your Hopings; the more you are comparatively great. Heaven will wipe away your Tears, and those Joys will be long enough, when they come.